

Message Text

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42

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 OC-05

CCO-00 SCCT-01 SCS-03 SCA-01 PRS-01 SAM-01 USIE-00

OCL-00 SS-15 PM-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

DODE-00 /061 W

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O R 191107Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 0000

AMCONGEN ASMARA NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMNAVTELCOM IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR

NAVCOMUNIT ASMARA IMMEDIATE

NAVCOMSTA NEA MAKRI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 8652

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR ET

SUBJECT: CISCO TWO: EPMG PRESS RELEASE: EMBASSY COMMENTS

REF: A) ADDIS 8651; B) STATE 169796; C) ADDIS 8645

1. IN FOLLOW UP CONVERSATION TO THAT REPORTED REF C, MOFA'S AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR TOLD POL COUNSELOR AT 2000 HOURS JULY 18 THAT FONMIN STILL TRYING CLEAR DRAFT TEXT OF EPMG STATEMENT WITH DIRG. HE STILL UNAUTHORIZED TO CONVEY TEXT FOR EMBASSY CLEARANCE. HE THEN PROCEEDED "INFORMALLY" TO READ TEXT OF DRAFT STATEMENT WHICH IDENTICAL TO THAT TRANSMITTED REF A. POL COUNSELOR SAID HE COULD REACT TO DRAFT TEXT ONLY ON PERSONAL BASIS AND GAVE IT AS HIS VIEW THAT SECTION OF DRAFT RELEASE DEALING WITH KAGNEW AND PARTICULARLY PASSAGE ASSERTING THAT FACILITY "NOW IN THE LAST STAGES
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OF ITS CLOSING DOWN" UNDESIRABLE. IF MOFA FELT IT NECESSARY TO

MENTION KAGNEW AT ALL, SEEMED BETTER TO AVOID CHARACTERIZATION OF PHASE DOWN FACILITY HAD NOW REACHED. DIRECTOR UNDERTOOK PASS THIS PERSONAL REACTION BACK TO FONMIN BUT POINTED OUT THAT IT UNCERTAIN FONMIN STILL IN POSITION ALTER DRAFT ASSUMING HE WISHED TO DO SO.

2. SITUATION REVIEWED ONCE MORE AT 2100 HOURS AT WHICH TIME DIRECTOR NOTED THAT RELEASE HAD STILL NOT BEEN CLEARED AND EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT IT WOULD BE CLEARED OR USED THAT EVENING. IT WAS LEFT THAT IF TEXT WERE APPROVED EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE GET FULL TEXT OFFICIALLY TO EMBASSY.

3. REF B WAS RECEIVED AT 2311 HOURS LOCAL JULY 18, FOLLOWING TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR WHICH CAUSED ALL EMBASSY COMPOUND TELEPHONES TO FAIL. WE CONTACTED MOFA'S AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR AT OPENING OF BUSINESS IN MOFA TODAY, JULY 19 AND PASSED GIST REF B. AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR RESPONDED THAT ETHIOPIAN RELEASE HAD BEEN READ IN ENGLISH ON ETHIOPIAN RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWSCASTS AT 2215 HOURS JULY 17.

4. WHEN POL COUNSELOR THEREAFTER CALLED AT MOFA TO OBTAIN TEXT, AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR HAMID, IN PROVIDING SAME, MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A) MOFA HAD CONSIDERED ITS ALTERNATIVES ONCE KIDNAP STORY APPEARED IN US PRESS(CF. STAE 169168). FONMIN HAD REACHED CONCLUSION THAT ETHIOPIAN INTERESTS REQUIRED A STATEMENT BY EPMG AND HAD DIRECTED THAT STATEMENT "FOLLOW SPIRIT OF US PRESS GUIDANCE."
B) MOFA HAD NOTED THAT TEXT OF REVISED CONTINGENCY PRESS GUIDANCE ON SUBJECT (CF. STATE 167579) HAD MADE ALLUSION TO KAGNEW STATION. " IN VIEW OF CURRENT WORLD-WIDE CONTROVERSY CONCERNING GREAT POWER FACILITIES IN THIRD COUNTRIES" MOFA HAD DEEMED IT NECESSARY TO WORK INTO STATEMENT HISTORY OF KAGNEW STATION AND ITS CURRENT STATUS.

C) EMBASSY WOULD NOTE, HAMID SAID, THAT EVERY EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE KEEP RELEASE GENERAL. FRONT END, IN LINE FONMIN'S INSTRUCTIONS, DOES FOLLOW SPIRIT OF US PRESS GUIDANCE. BACK END CONCERNING KAGNEW, HE SAID, IS SLIGHTLY AMENDED VERSION OF IEG STATEMENT PUBLISHED FOLLOWING CONCLUSION OF OCTOBER 1973 AGREEMENT.

5. POL COUNSELOR REPLIED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES OF PUBLICATION THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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STATEMENT WERE NOT RPT NOT CONSONANT WITH FONMIN'S STATEMENT TO AMBASSADOR ON CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS PRIOR TO ANY RELEASE ON THIS SUBJECT (CF. ADDIS 8429 PARA 3). POL COUNSELOR INQUIRED WHETHER RELEASE HAD BEEN ISSUED IN AMHARIC AND EXPRESSED DESIRE IT BE WITHHELD FROM AMHARIC MEDIA IF THIS STILL POSSIBLE. HAMID SAID HE WOULD CHECK AND LET US KNOW. HE SUBSEQUENTLY TELEPHONED TO STATE THAT FONMIN HAD DIRECTED THAT PRESS STATEMENT NOT RPT NOT BE CARRIED BY AMHARIC MEDIA.

6. COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION: AS DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, MOFA'S ABILITY CONTROL MANNER IN WHICH EPMG STATEMENTS ARE FORMULATED AND RELEASED IS LIMITED. CLEARLY, EPMG PREFERRED PUTTING ITSELF ON RECORD IN "CISCO TWO" CONTEXT AS SOON AS STORY BROKE IN US RATHER THAN REACTING THEREAFTER TO EXPECTED QUERIES.

7. LINKAGE IN STATEMENT BETWEEN ABDUCTION AND KAGNEW STATION IS UNHELPFUL. WE ASSUMED THAT MOFA REFERENCE TO KAGNEW IN AMENDED US PRESS GUIDANCE IS PRETEXT AND THAT REAL PURPOSE IS EPMG'S TACTICAL DESIRE TO GO ON RECORD WITH ITS INTERPRETATION OF KAGNEW'S STATUS TO STRENGTHEN ITS POSITION AT KAMPALA OAU, CM AND SUMMIT ON WHOLE ERITREAN NEXUS.

8. AS EPMG HAS NOW MADE ITS POINT PUBLICLY, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS WE BE INSTRUCTED TO GO BACK TO MOFA WITH REQUESTS THAT IN ANY FUTURE STATEMENTS ON ABDUCTIONS THERE BE NO FURTHER REFERENCE TO FUTURE OF KAGNEW. IN SHORT, WE WOULD WISH SEE LINKAGE BETWEEN THESE TWO ADVERSELY INTERACTING SUBJECTS BROKEN.

9. EMBASSY INTENDS PURSUE AS APPROPRIATE SEPARATE QUESTION OF INTERPRETATION US-ETHIOPIAN AGREEMENTS ON OPERATION KAGNEW STATION. WE NOTE THAT AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR'S EXPLANATION AND LANGUAGE USED IN RELEASE, VIZ., THAT "FACILITY IS NOW IN THE LAST STAGE OF ITS CLOSING DOWN" IS NOT RPT NOT NECESSARILY INCOMPATIBLE WITH SUBSTANCE OF 1953 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ON DURATION OF OUR KAGNEW TENURE.

10. AS OF 1400 HOURS LOCAL JULY 19 WE HAVE HAD NO RPT NO PRESS QUERIES IN ADDIS. HOWEVER, RADIO ETHIOPIA IS STILL BROADCASTING FULL TEXT OF RELEASE IN ITS ENGLISH NEWSCASTS. QUERIES SHOULD FOLLOW MOMENTARILY.

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